

DOT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUMMARY OF MEETING

May 16, 2019

The Department of Transportation Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking (ACHT) convened its third public meeting on May 16, 2019 at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Headquarters in Washington, DC. In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the public meeting was announced in advance via a Federal Register Notice and the Department of Transportation website.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

- **Chair:** Catherine Todd Bailey, Former U.S. Ambassador to Latvia; Chairperson and Co-Founder, Operation Open Arms
- **Vice Chair:** Linda Burtwistle, CEO, Coach USA; Board Member, American Bus Association (ABA)
- Nicole Clifton, Vice President, Global Public Affairs, United Parcel Service (UPS)
- Michelle Guelbart, Director of Private Sector Engagement, ECPAT-USA
- Greg Hynes, Alternate National Legislative Director, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD), United Transportation Union
- Kristen Joyner, Executive Director, South West Transit Association (SWTA)
- Loretta Kennedy, Director, Domestic Operations and Investigations, JetBlue Airways
- Laura Lederer, President, Global Centurion
- David Lorenzen, Chief, Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement, Iowa Department of Transportation
- Mi Yung Park, Government Relations Director, The A21 Campaign
- Eric Smith, Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Hendry Marine Industries
- Lynn Thoman, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

- Chad Aldridge, Policy and Outreach Manager, Port of Seattle
- Caroline Diemar, Director, Polaris - National Human Trafficking Hotline
- Gary McCarthy, Bureau Chief, Enforcement and Compliance Division, Office of Inspector General, Arizona Department of Transportation
- Nancy Rivard, President and Founder, Airline Ambassadors
- Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman, Vice President, Public Affairs, National Association of Truck Stop Operators
- Joanne Young, Managing Partner, Kirstein & Young; DC Council Member, Vital Voices

PANELISTS IN ATTENDANCE

- Ima Matul, Manager, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking
- Giselle Meza, Founder, Puresa Humanitarian
- Shamere McKenzie, CEO, Sun Gate Foundation

OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN ATTENDANCE

- Christine Baglin, Principal, DSA, Inc.
- Lee Carter, Student, Temple University
- Alison Griffith, Director of National Outreach, Henry Clay Center
- Rochelle Keyhan, CEO, Collective Liberty
- Eleanor Lamb, Government Reporter, Transport Topics
- James Lewis, Lead Communications Specialist, Amtrak Police Department
- Debora Sutor, International Vice President, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

- David Short, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Aviation and International Affairs
- Julie Abraham, Director, Office of International Transportation and Trade
- Maha Alkhateeb, Transportation Research Analyst, Office of International Transportation and Trade
- Nicole Bambas, Senior Advisor, Office of International Transportation and Trade
- Thomas Keane, Director, Office of Safety Programs, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Pei Lee, Transportation Specialist, Office of International Transportation and Trade
- Rebecca Ortego, Transportation Specialist, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Amy Plovnick, Community Planner, U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center
- Shari Schaftlein, Director, Office of Human Environment, Federal Highway Administration
- Brian Throop, Director, Federal Aviation Administration

Welcome and Overview

At 10:05 a.m., Chairperson Bailey opened by calling the meeting to order and welcoming Committee members, subcommittee members, survivors of human trafficking, and the public.

At 10:07 a.m., Chairperson Bailey conducted a roll call of Committee members in attendance.

Chairperson Bailey brought forward a motion to adopt the minutes from the March 12 meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved.

Chairperson Bailey introduced Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) David Short as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

DAS Short welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. He reminded Committee members that, according to statute, the ACHT final report is due to the Secretary of Transportation on July 3, 2019.

Survivor Panel

Chairperson Bailey introduced the panel of human trafficking survivors, and Committee members provided a more detailed introduction for each panelist. Panelists Shamere McKenzie, Ima Matul, and Giselle Meza gave compelling testimonies regarding their personal sex and labor trafficking experiences. Each speaker described how different modes of transportation were utilized during their trafficking experiences.

Shamere McKenzie described her experience as a victim of sex trafficking, and being enslaved for 18 months before she was able to escape. She stated that she was forced to ride the Metro North train from New York City to Connecticut and solicit customers on the train. She also worked at a truck stop where truckers would use their radios to find and purchase commercial sex, and warn other truckers of police activity. Her pimp even forced her to drive victims across state lines at gun point. Ms. McKenzie tried to leave several times, but feared her pimp would follow through on his threats to kill her and her family. She also avoided seeking assistance from law enforcement as she felt she could not trust them given that they had arrested her multiple times, were verbally abusive to her, and some of the officers were even among her buyers. After Ms. McKenzie escaped, she was charged with the crime of driving a minor across state lines under the Mann Act, despite being held at gunpoint. She now works as a human trafficking activist and subject matter expert. Shamere also serves as the CEO of the Sun Gate Foundation, an organization that provides educational opportunities for human trafficking survivors.

Ima Matul shared how she became a victim of labor trafficking when she was 17 years old. Ms. Matul was trafficked from Indonesia to the United States, and forced to work at a home in Beverly Hills. When traveling to the United States, Ima's trafficker held her passport and ticket, and answered all questions from the customs and Transportation Security Administration officers. While enslaved, Ms. Matul faced physical and verbal abuse, and was scared to leave because she had an expired visa. Today, Ms. Matul works as the manager of the Survivor Leadership Program at the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST). Ms. Matul also spoke on behalf of others from the Los Angeles Survivor Network. She noted that there are indicators that people in the transportation sector can look for to recognize signs of human trafficking. These include potential victims being unfamiliar with travel plans or their destinations, one person carrying the bags of an entire group, and a child dropping off children at a school bus but not going to school themselves. Asking follow-up questions about these types of situations can help to uncover cases of trafficking or encourage victims to ask for help.

Giselle Meza described how she was tricked into sex trafficking from her hometown in Oregon when she was in high school. At the time, Ms. Meza took three public transit buses to get to school. A well-dressed, sophisticated woman in a fancy car began stopping by the bus stop, asking if Giselle needed help, and slowly gained Giselle's trust. Eventually, the woman started giving Giselle rides and buying her clothing. Ms. Meza traveled to New York with the woman, who then took her to London and forced her to engage in commercial sex; while keeping her trapped and locked up. While Ms. Meza was traveling, her trafficker held her passport, and no one asked why she was not holding her own documents or answering questions directly. Ms. Meza escaped from the apartment in London where she was being held, and made it to the airport. The parent of a friend helped Ms. Meza book a ticket home, but no one in the airport asked her questions about her appearance and why she was so upset. Today, as the founder of Puresa Humanitarian, Ms. Meza works to provide rescue services, safe homes, aftercare, prevention, education, and opportunity for self-sustainability to survivors of sex trafficking in India; and creates awareness by sharing her story in the U.S. and worldwide.

Throughout the shared experiences of the three panelists, numerous opportunities arose for transportation professionals they encountered to ask questions and intervene; but they did not do so. One panelist noted that transportation is critical to a trafficker's criminal enterprise, and there is a need to disrupt the ways in which traffickers transport victims.

During the question and answer period, Committee member Kristen Joyner, Executive Director of the South West Transit Association, asked how we can do a better job teaching transportation professionals and the public to recognize that trafficking exists. One panelist stated that paying attention to others and asking questions can help people recognize what is going on. Another recommended that there should be an educational program for each mode of transportation to recognize indicators of human trafficking and potential victims.

Committee members and the panelists discussed suggestions to improve signage content for victims, and questioned who the target audience should be for the materials. Panelists stated that it is important to reach both travelers and victims. Most victims are scared to call a hotline due to potential re-victimization. There are also barriers to getting the help they need (e.g., not enough space in a safe home). Panelists suggested that signage language addressed to victims should focus on their inability to leave and feelings of entrapment, as those sentiments are common to both sex and labor trafficking. Committee member Sherri Garner Brumbaugh, President and CEO of the American Trucking Associations, also shared concerns that victims may not have the means (e.g., a personal cellphone) to contact the phone number on a poster, and that other avenues of communication should be considered.

The panelists also noted that signage with the term “human trafficking” may be less effective for victims, because many victims do not know the term, and do not recognize themselves as victims of human trafficking. Panelists explained that their biggest barriers to leaving their trafficking situation were fears regarding their personal safety. They suggested messaging that supports security, personal safety, and action. All the panelists emphasized the importance of educating youth regarding human trafficking, as victims tend to only realize that they are being trafficked once they were well into the process.

Committee member Michelle Guelbart, Director of Private Sector Engagement for ECPAT-USA, suggested organizing domestic focus groups of human trafficking survivors to discuss current signage aimed at victim self-identification, and to assess whether the language is effective. Ms. Guelbart recommended surveying the focus group to understand the type of language needed to reach victims in various situations.

Committee member Nicole Clifton, Vice President of Global Public Affairs for UPS, asked the panelists for suggestions on how parents should raise awareness regarding human trafficking with their children. Panelists suggested that parents should not be worried about raising the reality of human trafficking with their children, and should instead be nosy in a non-judgmental way. One panelist noted the danger of social media and strangers being categorized as “friends,” as such platforms are utilized by traffickers as recruiting tools.

There was also discussion regarding the need to gather human trafficking data intersecting with the transportation sector to inform and focus transportation stakeholder efforts. The National Human Trafficking Hotline collects data on transportation that can be used to assess areas that require greater attention. In addition, the panelists noted that all modes of transportation are being used for trafficking, and it is therefore important to address the issue across all modes of transportation.

At 12:15 p.m. the Committee took a break for lunch, and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

ACHT Report Overview, Discussion, and Deliberation

At 1:20 p.m., Chairperson Bailey opened a discussion regarding the Committee report by reviewing the legislative requirements, providing an overview of the report, and noting the pending recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation.

Chairperson Bailey walked through each section of the report and confirmed agreement of the full Committee regarding each section. Suggestions made by Committee members on the report included:

- The terms mode-specific, niche-specific, and sector-specific are used throughout the report. The report should be consistent regarding which terminology is used.
- The term niche-specific should be included within the definitions.
- Commercial Act should be changed to Commercial Sex Act.
- Missing sources should be added.
- The resources listed within the Quick Implementation Guides should include websites in addition to phone numbers.
- Mode-related NGOs should be added to the How to Get Started sections of the Quick Implementation Guides.
- Consider using “Model” instead of “Modal” for a section heading.
- The report could add a recommendation for public awareness materials to include language geared towards victims, such as: “Are You Trapped?” or “It is Safe to Call.” For people who do not have access to a phone, there could be language such as: “Talk to Someone.” The report could also include a recommendation for a unified public awareness message to be developed with survivor input.
- Mode-specific demand-focused training materials should be considered for addition.
- A best practice could be added regarding combining signage for the general public and victims. However, this may be difficult in practice.
- Include information from the Survivor Panel, such as indicators and recommendations.
- A date should be added to the state legislation chart, because these laws are frequently passed/changed.

Public Comment

Chairperson Bailey opened the meeting for public comment. The following public comments were made:

- Christine Baglin provided an update on the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) project 20-121: State DOT Contributions to the Study, Investigation, and Interdiction of Human Trafficking. So far, over 70% of state DOTs have responded to a survey regarding their counter human trafficking activities. Ms. Baglin discussed the preliminary results from the survey. Next steps on the project will involve interviews with state DOTs to understand their activities and challenges in more detail.
- Chad Aldridge provided suggestions on the Committee report:
 - The indicator regarding behavioral dependence on a traveling companion within the Indicators of Human Trafficking chart is applicable to all sectors.

- The title of the section on public transit agencies should be changed to reflect that the section is referring to Public Transit (bus and rail transit).
- The section on mass transit and passenger rail should be changed to say Passenger Rail.
- Include contact information for the Port of Seattle.
- Rochelle Keyhan of Collective Liberty provided the following suggestions:
 - The report includes a recommendation for states to create a human trafficking task force. However, almost every state already has a task force in place. This could be changed to recommend incorporating transportation issues into existing state human trafficking task forces.
 - The sample compliance strategy/protocol addresses what to do if an employee reports a suspected case. It does not address what to do if a victim self-reports. The protocol should be victim-centered, and ensure that the victims feel safe until the appropriate person comes to help.
 - The recommendation on Big Data Analysis could be expanded to include a United Nations counterterrorism travel program that uses data analytics from travel corporations. Ms. Keyhan offered to send more information about this to DOT.
 - The recommendations for law enforcement trainings should be expanded. The Texas DPS example focuses on prevention and is too narrow, but there are additional examples of law enforcement trainings that could be mentioned.

Next Steps and Closing

At 2:25 p.m., Chairman Bailey provided each committee member with an opportunity to share their thoughts regarding their participation on the committee. The Committee went around the table and each provided their closing thoughts regarding their experience serving on the Committee in addition to the Committee's overall work.

David Short, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Aviation and international Affairs, thanked Committee members, meeting attendees, and the survivor panelists. He noted that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held by teleconference on June 17, pending publication in the Federal Register.

At 3:05 p.m., Chairperson Bailey closed the meeting.